The Musical Activism of
Sweet Honey in the Rock

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In the beginning…
Musicology

African Roots

- Denko: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7faPGXyp0u4
- Fulani Chant
- Breaths: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oE4Qatypjs
African Retentions

Elements similar in African and African-American music
call and response
heterophony, together but varied exaggerated tone

Added?
harmony part above melody
instrumentalized voice
African Retentions

*Dance of the Hunter*-high flute, call and response, repeated harp (cora) bass
African field recording
African Retentions

*The Angels Bowed Down*—Instrumentalized voice, heterophony, ‘chiming voices’
Fisk Jubilee Singers
Evolving
Moses—probably refers to Harriet Tubman, and a stop on the Underground Railroad “in some lonesome graveyard.”

Georgia Sea Island Singers
Social Justice

*Ain’t I Right*-a commentary on a stingy master. Exaggerated tone, growls, exclamations.

Georgia Sea Island Singers
Gospel: Climate Change/Natural disasters?

- Beatitudes
- Run, Run, Mourner, Run:  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeBE2Ih3xR8
- Wade in the Water
- “Tis the Old Ship of Zion:  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8t8JhGWKmGw
- In the Morning When I Rise:  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAJBZXlzKcY
Women’s Issues and Oppression: Bullying, Rape, and Murder

- Oughta Be a Woman: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvG-GaE_MH0
- The Women Gather: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iKNep3zURQ
- No Mirrors in My Nana’s House: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD57KULeIgg
Social Justice

No More Auction Block - 1st verse
heterophony, 2nd chiming in, 3rd call and response, 4th exaggerated tone, growls.
Sweet Honey in the Rock
(Fisk Jubilee Singers tour of 1873)
Evolving
Working People and Environmental Justice: GenX, Flint, hog farms

- I Remember, I Believe: [Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUAbHhlOYhE)
- Are There Any Rights I'm Entitled To?
- Poverty Train
- More Than a Paycheck: [Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOtXz6p4xeA)
Evolving
International Social Justice

- Are My Hands Clean?
- Peace: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0HWwOUlzKk
- Chile Your Waters Run Red Through Soweto
- Biko
Evolving
American Social Justice: Whose Lives Matter?

*I Remember, I Believe*-instrumentalized voice, high harmony, heterophony, and more. Sweet Honey in the Rock (Bernice Johnson-Reagon)
American Social Justice: Whose Lives Matter?

- Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King
- Echo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGCYcl_Om1I
- Our Side Won
- We Shall Not Be Moved
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Ella's Song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Uus--gFrc
- Give Your Hand to Struggle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LV9Vf0a7YtM
Evolution
“Let there be Peace”

- https://www.bernicejohnsonreagon.com/
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzICwz28qVw